

# SUPPLEMENT

## TO THE

# NONCONFORMIST.

LONDON: WEDNESDAY, MAY 4, 1869.

[GRATIS.]

### Literature.

#### LOWELL'S ESSAYS.\*

Mr. Lowell has won no mean reputation as a poet. His more serious poems, full of refinement and delicacy both of thought and expression, are familiar to many of us, though he is more widely known by the keen and often grotesque humour of the "Biglow Papers." His appearance as an essayist cannot fail to excite interest and expectation. His powers would lead us to anticipate a certain fulness and closeness of thought, diversified and lit up by strokes of a very peculiar and original humour, and expressed with the easy grace of an accomplished scholar. And, on the whole, these expectations are fulfilled. These essays, indeed, are not so distinct from other essays as the "Biglow Papers" from other poems. They do not give us the impression of so quaint, original, and unique a power; but they are closely packed with thought, they contain much keen and happy criticism, and they abound with humorous touches which, though of a more subdued order than we might have anticipated, are nevertheless in perfect keeping with the element in which they work, and fall just as naturally from the pen of the grave critic and essayist as do the wilder flashes and sallies of his rollicking humour from the lips of "Birdofreedom Sawin, Esq."

The volume consists of an essay on "Dryden," which is a very sagacious and striking criticism on a poet too little read at present; two slighter studies of "Lessing" and "Rousseau," in which, however, both the German critic and the French sentimentalist receive very discriminating and thoughtful treatment; papers on "Witchcraft" and "New England Two Centuries Ago," in which Mr. Lowell paints very striking pictures of the blended virtues and defects of the Puritan character as developed in the New World; and an essay entitled "Shakespeare Once More," which occupies by far the largest space, and is, in our judgment, at once the best and the worst part of the volume. Most of these papers have, we believe, appeared before in the pages of the *North American Review* or other Magazines, and one or two of them read as if they had been delivered in the form of lectures. Whatever their original form, every thoughtful reader will rejoice to have them gathered together in this handsome volume, and will find a place for it on his shelf of pet books. It is eminently a book for the fireside and the bedside.

Having said this much of the volume in general, we select the essay on Shakespeare for a more detailed notice, mainly because it has both pleased and perplexed us beyond any of its fellows. This essay really consists of two parts—a dissertation on Shakespeare in general, and an analysis of the play of "Hamlet." Our pleasure has arisen from the masterly and suggestive criticism of the second part, and our perplexity from the marked contrast between the two parts—a contrast so marked as to make it difficult to believe that the whole essay was written by one man, impossible to believe that it was written at the same time. The earlier section of the essay, though it has many fine points in it, has the straining ambition of a juvenile performance, and is well-nigh spoiled to our taste by the excessive Latinism of its style. No one can read it without receiving hints and suggestions about Shakespeare, the influences that formed him and the characteristics of his works, which he will be glad to ponder; but it surely is no singularity, no squeamishness, of taste which impels us to protest against such sentences as this:—"However this may be, his (Shakespeare's) works have come down to us in a con-

dition of manifest and admitted corruption in some portions, while in others there is an obscurity which may be attributed either to an idiosyncratic use of words and condensation of phrase, to a depth of intuition for a proper coalescence with which ordinary language is inadequate, to a concentration of passion in a focus that consumes the lighter links which bind together the clauses of a sentence, or of a process of reasoning in common parlance, or to a sense of music which mingles music and meaning without essentially confounding them." Mr. Lowell is a great admirer of the Saxon element of our common tongue. When he chooses he is master of a very expressive and excellent style. In the second part of this very essay he writes with so much clearness and ease, his sentences are so well formed, and are lit up with so many happy phrases beyond the reach of mere art, that it is amazing and perplexing to find many such sentences as we have just quoted, as awkward, as involved, as latinized, in the first forty pages of what were otherwise a most admirable criticism. Our own hypothesis is, that the two parts of the essay are really two separate essays, written at two different periods, with a long interval between them, which he has brought together and joined without due care.

We note this marked difference between the earlier and later parts of the essay on Shakespeare, in order that our readers may not be warned off from the study of it, as, judging by their unjust verdicts, several critics seem to have been. The second part, the analysis of Hamlet, is really admirable, and will well repay the most careful study. Indeed, it would be hard to find any single criticism, at least, in English, which to ordinary readers throws so much light on the masterpiece of our great poet. It is impossible within our limits to go through the whole analysis, or even to handle so much of it as will do it full justice. But we give a few extracts from the masterly criticism that, to some extent, our readers may judge for themselves, both of Mr. Lowell's insight into Shakespeare's characters, and the felicity and humour with which he is able to express it. Thus, for instance, in vindicating Shakespeare's introduction of low characters and comic scenes to the tragic stage, he says—(the italics are for the most part ours):—

"That Shakespeare introduced such scenes and characters with deliberate intention, and with a view to artistic relief and contrast, there can hardly be a doubt. We must take it for granted that a man whose works show everywhere the results of judgment sometimes acted with forethought. I find the springs of the profoundest sorrow and pity in the hardened indifference of the grave-diggers, in their careless discussion as to whether Ophelia's death was by suicide or no, in their singing and jesting at their dreary work.

"A pickaxe and a spade, a spade,  
For—and a shroud—sheet:  
O, a pit of clay for to be made  
For such a guest is meet."

"We know who is to be the guest of this earthen hospitality, how much beauty, love, and heartbreak are to be covered in that pit of clay. All we know of Ophelia reacts upon us with tenfold force, and we recoil from our amusement at the ghastly drollery of the two delvers with a shock of horror. That the unconscious Hamlet should stumble on this grave of all others, that it should be here that he should pause to muse humbly on death and decay—all this prepares us for the revulsion of passion in the next scene, and for the frantic confession—

"I loved Ophelia; forty thousand brothers  
Could not with all their quantity of love,  
Make up my sum."

And it is only here that such an asseveration would be true even to the feeling of the moment; for it is plain from all we know of Hamlet, that he could not so have loved Ophelia, that he was incapable of the self-abandonment of a true passion, that he would have analyzed this emotion, as he does all others, would have peeped and botanized upon it till it became to him a mere matter of scientific interest. And this force of contrast, and this horror of surprise, were necessary so to intensify his remorseful regret that he should believe himself for once in earnest."

Or take this keen analysis of the character of Hamlet himself, in which the suggestions of

the previous extract are elaborately drawn out:—

"Hamlet seems the natural result of the mixture of (his) father and mother in his temperament, the resolution and persistence of the one, like sound timber worm-holed and made shaky, as it were, by the other's infirmity of mind and discontinuity of purpose. In nature so imperfectly mixed, it is not uncommon to find vehemence of intention the prelude and counterpoise of weak performance, the conscious nature striving to keep up its self-respect by a triumph in words all the more resolute that it feels assured beforehand of inevitable defeat in action. As in such slipshod housekeeping men are their own largest creditors, they find it easy to stave off utter bankruptcy of conscience by taking up one unpaid promise with another larger, and a heavier interest, till such self-swindling becomes habitual and by degrees almost painless. How did Coleridge discount his own notes of this kind with less and less specie as the figures lengthened on the paper. . . . I find two passages in Dante that contain the exactest possible definition of that habit or quality of Hamlet's mind which justifies the tragic turn of the play, and renders it natural and unavoidable from the beginning. The first is from the second canto of the *Inferno*:—

"And like the man who unwill'd what he willed,  
And for new thoughts doth change his first intent,  
So that he cannot anywhere begin,  
Such became I upon that slope obscure,  
Because with thinking I consumed resolve,  
That was so ready at the setting out."

"Again, in the fifth of the *Purgatorio*:—  
"For always he, in whom one thought buds forth  
Out of another, farther puts the goal,  
For each has only force to mar the other."

Dante was a profound metaphysician, and as in the first passage he describes and defines a certain quality of mind, so in the other he tells us its result in the character and life, namely, indecision and failure—the goal farther off at the end than the beginning. It is remarkable how close a resemblance of thought, and even of expression, there is between the former of the quotations and a part of Hamlet's famous soliloquy—

"Thus conscience (i.e. consciousness) doth make cowards of us all;  
And thus the native hue of resolution  
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought.  
And enterprises of great pith and moment  
With this regard their currents turn awry,  
And lose the name of action."

It is an inherent peculiarity of a mind like Hamlet's that it should be conscious of its own defect. Men of his type are for ever analysing their own emotions and motives. They cannot do anything, because they always see two ways of doing it. . . . The imagination is so much in overplus that thinking a thing becomes better than doing it, and thought with its easy perfection, capable of everything because it can accomplish everything with ideal means, is vastly more attractive and satisfactory than deed, which must be wrought at best with imperfect instruments, and always falls short of the conception that went before it. . . . Hamlet dwells so exclusively in the world of ideas that the world of facts seems trifling; nothing is worth the while; and he has been so long objectless and purposeless, so far as actual life is concerned, that, when at last an object and an aim are forced upon him, he cannot deal with them, and gropes vainly for a motive outside of himself that shall marshal his thoughts for him and guide his faculties into the path of action. He is the victim not so much of feebleness of will as of an intellectual indifference that hinders the will from working long in any one direction. He wishes to will, but never wills. His continual iteration of resolve shows that he has no resolution. He is capable of passionate energy where the occasion presents itself suddenly from without, because nothing is so irritable as conscious irresolution with a duty to perform. But of deliberate energy he is not capable; for there the impulse must come from within, and the blade of his analysis is so subtle that it can divide the finest hair of motive 'twist north and north-west side, leaving him desperate to choose between them. . . . A critical instinct so insatiable that it must turn upon itself for lack of something else to hew and hack, becomes incapable at last of originating anything except indecision. It becomes infallible in what not to do. How easily he might have accomplished his task is shown by the conduct of Laertes. When he has a death to revenge, he raises a mob, breaks into the palace, bullies the king, and proves how weak the usurper really was. . . . Hamlet is always studying himself. This world, and the other too, are always present to his mind; and there in the corner is the little black kobold of a doubt making mouths at him. . . . He doubts everything. He doubts the immortality of the soul, just after seeing his father's spirit, and hearing from its mouth the secrets of the other world. He doubts Horatio even, and swears him to secrecy on the cross of his sword, though he himself has no assured belief in the sacredness of the symbol. He doubts Ophelia, and asks her, 'Are you honest?' He doubts the ghost, after he has had a little time to think about it, and so gets up the play to test the guilt of the king.

\* Among my Books. Six Essays. By JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL. (London: Macmillan and Co.)



"And how coherent the whole character is! With what perfect tact and judgment Shakespeare, in the advice to the players, makes him (Hamlet) an exquisite critic! For just here that part of his character which would be weak in dealing with affairs is strong. A wise scepticism is the first attribute of a good critic."

All this surely is in the best vein of criticism. And in the essay itself, where the *lacuna* we have been compelled to leave by the demands on our space are filled up, where the irony and the madness of Hamlet, and the fatal results of his irresolution, are dwelt upon at length, and most of the other characters in the play are as delicately characterised—and the sketch of Horatio is as effective as the portrait of Hamlet—our readers may well believe they will find a welcome help and guide in their study of the greatest work of the greatest of merely human poets.

As in these days of easy communication even this brief review of his essay may reach Mr. Lowell's eye, we venture to point out to him that there is one, and that perhaps the strongest, illustration of Hamlet's inbred scepticism which appears to have escaped his notice. Not only does the moody prince doubt "the immortality of the soul just after seeing his father's spirit"; not only does he "doubt the ghost after he has 'had a little time to think about it'"; he also, in the very presence of the apparition, doubts whether the ghost is, as it claims to be, his father's spirit. He cries,

"I'll call thee King—Hamlet—Father!"

Even in that awful presence he can only suppress his doubts by a strong effort of will.

#### GEORGE ELIOT'S NEW POEM.\*

This poem is based on the narrative recorded in the latter part of the fourth chapter of the Book of Genesis. The story of Cain's going out into the land of Nod and building a city there, in which agriculture and the mechanical and the poetic arts had their origin, is one of those stories which the legendary imagination is sure to appropriate and develop. The beginnings of power and the growth of purpose in the race or in races are themes that have an irresistible charm for those who are conscious of any sort of faculty and are impelled to use it. George Eliot has taken up the story of him who was "the father of all such as handle the harp and organ," and has given us a vision of the origin of music and song. There are three signally beautiful passages in this poem, from which we shall quote for our reader's benefit; but the poem, as a whole, a little disappoints us. George Eliot's genius is not lyrical, nor does her muse lend itself readily to descriptions. It needs passion to fire it; George Eliot's descriptions are too abstract, she does not think in images; many of these lines are rhythmical prose, beautiful indeed, but still prose rather than verse. With the exception of the three passages we have alluded to, we do not reckon this poem equal to the descriptive parts of "The Spanish Gypsy," and there the description was far inferior to the drama. The measure she has chosen, the rhymed dactyl, seems also to have faltered here; the freedom and dignity of blank verse would have given her freer scope. The poem opens with Cain's wandering in search of some far strand:—

"Ruled by kind gods who asked no offerings  
Save pure field-fruits, as aromatic things,  
To feed the subtler sense of frames divine  
That lived on fragrance for their food and wine,  
Wild joyous gods, who winked at faults and folly,  
And could be pitiful and melancholy."

None of Cain's children know anything of Death, until Lamech's kills his "fairest boy," by a chance stone hurled in "mere athletic joy"; till then too they knew nothing of labour, nothing of purpose or of aspiration. The description of the change that passed over them by the knowledge that they must die is of subtle truth and beauty.

"And a new spirit from that hour came o'er  
The race of Cain: soft idleness was no more,  
But even the sunshine had a heart of care,  
Smiling with hidden dread—a mother fair  
Who folding to her breast a dying child  
Reasons with feigned joy that but makes sadness wild.  
Death was now lord of life, and at his word  
Time, vague as air before, new terrors stirred,  
With measured wing now audibly arose  
Throbbing through all things to some unknown close.  
Now glad Content by clutching Haste was torn,  
And Work grew eager, and Device was born.  
It seemed the light was never loved before,  
Now each man said, 'I will go and come no more.'  
No budding branch, no pebble from the brook,  
No form, no shadow, but new dearth took  
From the one thought that life must have an end;  
And the last parting now began to send  
Diffusive dread through love and wedded bliss,  
Thrilling them into fiercer tenderness.  
Then Memory disclosed her face divine,  
That like the calm nocturnal lights doth shine

\* *The Legend of Jubal*. By GEORGE ELIOT. Macmillan's Magazine for May.

Within the soul, and shows the sacred graves,  
And shows the presence that no sunlight graves,  
No space, no warmth, but moves among them all;  
Gone and yet here, and coming at each call,  
With ready voice and eyes that understand,  
And lips that ask a kiss, and dear responsive hand."

The earnestness born of the knowledge of death sends Jubal to tame flocks and herds and Tubal-Cain to be a founder and framer of the metals. Jubal has an ear ever filled with melody. He longs to wed the "mighty tones and cries" of the earth and all sonorous notes to passionate human voices. The art of each man grows upon him, becoming, with his increasing power, a purpose and a passion. Jubal wanders forth in search of new sounds and new inspirations. The description of this is another of the passages we have noticed as specially admirable. We quote some lines from the close of it:—

"And ever as he travelled he would climb  
The farthest mountain, yet the heavenly chime,  
The mighty tolling of the far-off spheres,  
Beating their pathway, never touched his ears.  
But whereso'er he rose the heavens rose,  
And the far-gazing mountains could disclose  
Naught but a wider earth; until one height  
Showed him the ocean stretched in liquid light,  
And he could hear its multitudinous roar,  
Its plunge and hiss upon the pebbled shore;  
Then Jubal silent sat, and touched his lyre no more.

"He thought, 'The world is great, but I am weak,  
And where the sky ends is no solid peak  
For me to stand on but this panting sea,  
Which sobs as if it stored all life to be.  
New voices come to me whereso'er I roam;  
My heart, too, widens with its widening home.  
But song grows weaker, and the heart must break  
For lack of voice, or fingers that can wake  
The lyre's full answer; nay, these chords would be  
Too poor to speak the gathering mystery.  
The former songs seem little, yet no more  
Can soul, hand, voice, with interchanging lore,  
Tell what the earth is saying unto me;  
The secret is too great—I hear confusedly.'"

Jubal returns to his own city, an old, weary, worn-out man, with no lyre, and with thin and feeble voice. He is met by a company of musicians and singers, shouting his name:—

"The word was 'Jubal'! . . . 'Jubal' filled the air  
And seemed to ride aloft, a spirit there,  
Creator of the quire, the full-fraught strain  
That grateful rolled itself to him again.  
The aged man adust upon the bank—  
Whom no eye saw—at first with rapture drank  
The bliss of music, then, with swelling heart,  
Felt this was his own being's greater part,  
The universal joy once born in him.  
But when the train, with living face and limb,  
And vocal breath, came nearer and more near,  
The longing grew that they should hold him dear;  
Him, Lamech's son, whom all their father's knew,  
The breathing Jubal—him to whom their lore was due."

The feeble old man rushes in front of the advancing procession, crying, "I am Jubal, I! . . . I made the lyre." He is greeted with laughter, and driven out with scorn. As he is dying a beautiful face bends over him, and he hears words interpreting and reconciling him to his destiny:—

"'Jubal,' the face said, 'I am thy loved Past,  
The soul that makes thee one from first to last.  
I am the angel of thy life and death,  
Thy outbreathed being drawing its last breath.  
Am I not thine alone, a dear dead bride,  
Who blest thy lot above all men's beside?  
Thy bride whom thou wouldst never change, nor take  
Any bride living, for that dead one's sake?  
Was I not all thy yearning and delight,  
Thy chosen search, thy senses beauteous Right,  
Which still had been the hunger of thy frame  
In central heaven, hadst thou been still the same?  
Wouldst thou have asked aught else from any god,  
Whether with gleaming feet on earth he trod  
Or thundered through the skies, no other share  
Of mortal good, than in thy soul to bear  
The growth of song, and feel the sweet unrest  
Of the world's spring-tide in thy conscious breast?  
No, thou hadst grasped thy lot with all its pain,  
Nor loosed it any painless lot to gain  
Where music's voice was silent; for thy fate  
Was human music's self incorporate.

And gently hast thou lived, for not alone  
With hidden raptures were her secrets shown,  
Buried within thee, as the purple light  
Of gems may sleep in solitary night;  
But thy expanding joy was still to give,  
And with the generous air in song to live,  
Feeding the wave of ever-widening bliss  
Where fellowship means equal perfectness."

This is a very noble view of Art. Having its origin in a sense of the limitation of human life, it exalts its subjects. The cultivation of Art its own reward, and the triumph of the artist being in the enrichment of the common experience—

"'Twas but in giving that thou couldst atone  
For too much wealth amid thy poverty."

These are very noble teachings. They are worthy of being pondered by other than artists; for they hold true of all human faculty. They are another expression of two great Christian principles—the worship of the worthy for its own sake alone, and the finding of life in the losing of it.

#### DR. CHALMERS.\*

Dr. Chalmers's was essentially a germinating mind. It did not take in many ideas, notwithstanding that it lay large over many tracts of activity; but what it did assimilate, it held fast, and brought into full flower. Had he been more of an original thinker, he could never have been the great administrator he was. It has been said by somebody that to be successful one should only see one-half the object to be attained, and this finds no slight illustration in the case of Chalmers. A man who had been in the least persecuted by visions of possibilities, or had been more than usually quick to discern the long shadows which coming events cast before them, could scarcely have gone into the Church extension idea so undividedly as Dr. Chalmers did; for it was in itself nothing less than an indirect witness of the new wine already stirring within the old bottles of the Establishment life, certain sooner or later to burst them. But what was seen so clearly here, is just as clearly seen later in his life. In spite of the practical necessities which soon came to draw speculative ideals down to them, as the hungry hills draw the clouds for nourishment, Dr. Chalmers never anticipated a day when the bulk of Free Churchmen would hold so lightly that Establishment idea, of which, it must be confessed, he made a kind of idol.

But this very element it was which gave him his great strength; it imparted a wonderful singleness to his aims and activities. A certain massive simplicity marks his every product—a few great thoughts carried clearly into their many applications; this, and not the almost oriental luxuriance and intertwining wealth of Irving, is what we find in him. But his simplicity has a childlike element in it, sometimes leading to little outbursts of quite unconscious vanity, as we find in these letters he wrote home during his celebration at Oxford. From this root, too, spring the captivating earnestness and energy of the man. When he was occupied with anything, little or great, he was as completely absorbed in it as a child, who is never beaten out of his fullness of satisfied enjoyment by any self-consciousness or sense of incongruity. When he was made a lion of during that memorable visit to the South, it never seems to have struck him that it was the least out of place to record every detail in connection with it. He yields himself up as entirely to the atmosphere into which he is thrown, as though this were nothing less than the business of life; as indeed it was for the time being. His simplicity and unsuspecting childlikeness, are well seen in the anecdote about the way to produce mild whisky—so humorous and characteristic that we may quote it:—

"He was in the habit of going over on Saturday nights to a neighbouring minister's, then a bachelor like himself, and arranging to exchange pulpits on the Sunday. He was always flush with some new topic or new discovery. On one occasion it was, 'Do you know, sir, I have discovered a simple method to produce the mildest and most delicious whisky?'"

"Indeed! how do you manage that?"

"Purely by the action of the atmosphere. It's quite a mistake to cork your bottles and exclude the air. No, man take out the cork and throw open the cupboard-door and the air acting upon the spirit gives it, sir, a most delightful mildness."

"On the Sunday morning, as his neighbour mounted for Kilmany, he said with unbounded glee:—

"'I don't know what you'll get to eat, but I know what you'll get to drink. The whisky, sir, is unrivalled—very mild, you know, very mild.'"

"In the evening, as his friend returned, Chalmers came out and hailed him with his usual hearty salutations. Remembering his boast:

"'Well, sir, anything to eat?'"

"'Oh, as much as I wanted.'"

"'And with a significant leer, 'Anything to drink?'"

"'Oh yes, I got plenty to drink.'"

"'Ah, capital! well—'"

"'Well, when I arrived in the morning, as I was hot with riding, I took a glass of your whisky, and as I found it very mild, I took two before going up to preach.'"

"'Well, sir?'"

"'After the service I took some dinner, and sat and finished the bottle.'"

"'Finished the bottle!' gasped Chalmers in astonishment. 'Come, nonsense! if you had finished the bottle you would not have been here to tell the tale.'"

"'Oh yes, I finished the bottle. The fact is, Mr. Chalmers, you're a bachelor as well as myself, and if you take the cork out of your whisky bottle, and throw open your cupboard door, it will soon be a very mild whisky—yours was mostly water.' Chalmers looked a little crestfallen; but at last, with strong faith in the chemical action of air, and large charity for all men and womenkind, he gulped down the insinuation against his maidservant, and persisted: 'No, sir, no! you were deceived by its extreme mildness; purely the action of the atmosphere.'"

We may venture the remark that few "moderates" of the time would have been thus misled! Whatever engaged his mind for the

\* *Thomas Chalmers: a Biographical Study*. By JAMES DODDS, Author of "The Fifty Years' Struggle of the Scottish Covenanters." (Edinburgh: Oliphant and Co.)



moment dominated his whole nature like a tyrant. This, too, it was which gave such force to his preaching. After a somewhat dull and lumbering introduction, it is said that he seemed all at once to look as if he had lost himself in his theme; while his audience seemed to retire from him, and leave him free to utter himself. The secret of his great organising power likewise lay here. "He used to say in later years to a fellow presbyter with whom he often laboured in cases before the Church Courts: 'Give me the one main point of the case, and I'll work it out; I cannot scatter myself over a multitude of points.'"

The one note of Chalmers's character, then, is the power of seizing an essential idea, and following it up through all its ramifications. Though he had, in conjunction with this, a rare generosity and largeness of heart; yet, intellectually, he had a good deal of the Scotch narrowness and tenacity. He did not readily perceive the scent of flowers, not of his own garden-growth, and was rather apt to pronounce them weeds if they carried anything of a strange flavour. Unlike Irving, he was never overcome by the multitude of his thoughts, but rather by their overlooming simplicity. They were elevated, and like human figures seen through falling snow, looked larger and more wonderful than they really were, when they were beheld through the enthusiasm awakened in him by the infectious sense of the impressions of others. It is said he that he could preach a sermon over and over again, and always with equally powerful effect.

Yet let it not be thought we would seek to detract an iota from the greatness of such a man. He led a large company through the terrible desert that lay between the Egypt of a careless self-indulgent moderateism, if not to the Paradise of a perfect Church life, then to the Canaan of freedom and independence. Had he asserted the inevitable logic of facts, and thrown from him the clinging rags of State-endowment, which even then fluttered so portentously about him and his friends, we should have had still more cause for gratitude. But who is always wise? Dr. Chalmers is the later Scotch Reformer, who found the old ideas sufficient to determine noble and self-denying action in a great crisis; let others in Scotland carry out the principle to its last practical result; as indeed there are daily more and more signs of their doing.

As for Mr. Dodd's book it is interesting, enthusiastic, and well written. The chief fault we have to find with it is a fault which pertains to the class. It is all white light, and that is painful to the eye after a time. He proceeds on the principle of painting the perfect man and enlisting us under the banner of hero-worship. But it is meant for young men—we should remember that—and remember too, Thackeray's deeply significant words that the most hopeless thing for a youth is when he has no one to reverence. We hope Mr. Dodd's pleasant volume may lead not a few young men to a worthy reverence—reverence for a man who, with some faults, was very noble, and ever loyal to the Church and to the truth.

#### PRINCIPLES OF ECCLESIASTICAL AUTHORITY.\*

The idea of writing a work which should trace the progress of English law with respect to the ecclesiastical doctrines, forms, ceremonies, and obligations, now in use, was an admirable one, and Mr. Muscutt, an old writer upon such questions, has all the learning, industry, and accuracy which are necessary for the accomplishment of such a purpose. How is it that we are what we are in ecclesiastical matters? When was the beginning? What changes have taken place, and how did they take place? These are the questions to which this book, to a very considerable extent, furnishes the answer. At the same time, it is not altogether complete; it is not always clear; and the style is not always popular. Any one who may go to it for the purpose of amusement will be disappointed, but you cannot open a page without getting information. We could have wished the subject had been treated with more vigour and with less dryness, and that the author's mental habits were not quite so discursive as they appear to be; but the book is of value, both for its novelty of design and its fulness of matter.

The work begins with a chapter on the "Ob-lations of the Faithful," in which the primitive manner of making offerings for religious services is described, and the growth of compulsion traced. In some of the statements in this chapter we should not altogether agree, but

Mr. Muscutt has authority for them, and they may be legitimately held to be moot points. After tracing the history up to a certain period, Mr. Muscutt makes some well-aimed observations:—

"The moral history of the whole matter, taken as a whole, is replete with momentous moral results. The nation elected to obtain payments, enforced by 'coercion' and 'correction,' rather than by oblations, offerings, voluntary gifts, to sustain the ecclesiastical institution. It has had its reward. The Church gained the money, but the Church alienated the minds of men. Against this self-inflicted wrong no ecclesiastical institution can permanently stand. The more it extorts, the less does it enjoy. 'The divine right' to this or that power has long since ceased to frighten men, because the doctrine has never been able to establish itself upon evidence, or to commend itself by practice. The divine right to oblations or tithes has been surrendered by its own admirers and advocates, seeing they were the first to place that right upon fluctuating civil concessions rather than upon eternal sacred principles. Indeed, the entirety of the 'ecclesiastical institution' has, by that institution itself, been made to depend upon 'civil,' and not upon 'divine' right. Had the Church consented to retain the principle of 'oblations given by the faithful,' both as to manner and motive, as these oblations were at the first establishment of the English Church settled authoritatively by the apostolic see; there would have remained something more tangible upon which that plea might have been made to rest and by which it might have commended itself to adoption. But it has been either surrendered or sacrificed, for, so far as my inquiries go, I have not been able to find any more than one instance in which the payment of 'the church scot'—the 'alms fee' or 'tithes'—was placed upon Christian motive, after the Church had acquired a civil right to it. The instance is found in the law of Edmund, in which he says, 'We enjoin all Christian men the paying of tithes by virtue of their Christian profession, as also their church scot and alms fee. Let them who will not do it be excommunicated.' Admit the words 'Christian profession' relate to, or involve, Christian motive, and so far they show some appeal to it. But it is observable that this motive stands not alone. 'We enjoin,' and 'excommunicated,' are to be read along with 'Christian profession.' Take the whole together, and you have even here civil right paramount. The regal authority is included in the words 'we enjoin,' and the same authority is blended with the 'excommunicated'; and thus the old Saxon phrase, 'right law of God and man,' are implied. To be in 'contempt' (i.e., neglect) of either, exposed a man to severe penal consequences. If 'Christian profession' had stood by itself, there would have been a seeming return to the principle promulgated in 601. But coming as it does, one hundred and eleven years after Alfred had made it penal to withhold or deny 'tithes, church scot, light scot, plough alms, or any ecclesiastical right,' the whole range of principle, motive, mode of payment and enforcement, was essentially altered; for never afterwards is there the least trace of 'Christian profession' being appealed to by either ecclesiastical or secular law."

After this, the growth of bishoprics is traced. In early times, as we all know, the bishops were elected. Mr. Muscutt possesses, upon this and similar subjects, what may be termed the historical instinct, which enables a man to see at once the full meaning of words, and to discover all their remote references. This is shown in the chapter on the appointment of bishops, where the early Saxon laws are quoted. In one of these laws the King formally renounces the right to appoint to the Episcopate, and assigns the reason why he ought not to exercise such a power. Mr. Muscutt thus describes the situation,—

"He does more than renounce, he assigns the reason why he ought not to do it. He appoints his own officers, earls, judges, &c., but the archbishop 'ought' to take charge of the appointment of bishops. The distinction between the two orders of officers is so broadly and emphatically drawn as to show that the two orders of governors 'ought' not to intermeddle with each other's duties. The choice of bishops by the archbishop is placed upon the same foundation as that of abbots, priests, and deacons, but even this choice did not supersede the selection of them by other parties. We gather this fact from the requirement that the archbishop was himself to make 'inquiry into the life of the man chosen.' Chosen by whom? The same parties who chose the abbots, priests, and deacons. Who these were this law does not specify, but they were afterwards distinctly specified. Thus the legatine canons of A.D. 785 prescribe that 'when an abbot or abess depart this life, religious pastors of approved life be chosen from among themselves with the advice of the bishop.' And again: the canons of A.D. 816 prescribe that 'every bishop have the power of electing abbots and abbesses with the advice and consent of the family: let them set about it conjointly and orderly in all respects.' These two periods seem to throw light upon the law of 692. That law, when made, was well known and acted upon. It became in aftertimes abused or perverted, and therefore we have the expiations and corrections of the two subsequent periods. The deduction appears legitimate and forcible, that if abbots as religious pastors, having 'care of the souls committed to them within the monastery,' were to be chosen out of the family, the bishop was, according to the law of Wiltred, to be chosen by 'God's congregation,' whose choice was to be confirmed by the archbishop. For the bishop here stands upon precisely the same footing as the abbots, abbesses, priests, and deacons. The 'priest,' we shall find, was 'elected' by the people, of whom 'inquiry' was made by the bishop before he ordained him."

In the chapter on "Priests elected by the people," there is some very curious information, showing how, in early times, in Saxon England, the popular right was recognised in

the Episcopalian Church as fully as it is now denied by the same Church. The true successors of the Saxon Church in regard to its popular constitution, is not the State-Church but the Congregational Churches of England.

Mr. Muscutt proceeds to discuss "The Canonical Institutions," "Unity," "Orders," the "Two Swords," "Prescribed Services," "Pagan Rites," "Divine Discipline." Our readers will gather the nature of the contents of these chapters from the quotations we have already made. In Chapter IX., however, entitled "Christ and King," founded upon the celebrated words in the Laws of Alfred, where the King and his councillors declare that "they have decreed a secular discipline between Christ and King, in all cases where men were unwilling to conform to ecclesiastical discipline, with a just regard to the authority of the bishops," Mr. Muscutt rises into eloquent discourse. This chapter is one of great freshness.

Perhaps, the most practically valuable portion of this work is the table of "Ecclesiastical Pains and Penalties" at the end. It occupies sixteen closely printed pages, and is a most carefully compiled statement of what have been declared to be ecclesiastical offences, with the penalties attached to each offence. We commend it to the consideration of all who appreciate the past history of the Established Church, and wonder how it is that we are not a more Christian nation. Christian? Are these pains and penalties illustrations of Christianity?

Mr. Muscutt has drawn largely in this work from Johnson's Canons, which, he remarks, was published in 1720, and is now extremely scarce. He does not seem to be aware that a new edition of the work was published in the Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology in 1850, which is by no means scarce, and which possesses an advantage over the first in being carefully edited by Mr. Baron.

#### PROFESSOR PLUMPTRE'S BIBLICAL STUDIES.\*

Professor Plumptre has a singular taste and gift, remarkably developed, and of a remarkable value. As most men love the common and beaten tracks of thought, so he loves its side-paths and byways; untrodden fields have a special attraction for him, and the nooks where darkness and light blend to produce mysteries of shade amid which there may be hidden some flower as yet unplucked. Capable of treating large subjects largely, he is by preference and natural bent, "a minute discoverer"; he whips up unconsidered trifles, places them in various lights, exhibits their different aspects, sees meanings and connections in them which no man ever saw before, but which, nevertheless, when once they are pointed out, many men feel they might and ought to have found out for themselves, and shows how these too have their part and function in the great scheme. No man is more quick to take a hint, to detect the faintest clue, or more patient in following it out, or more full of resources when brought to a stand, or more happy in his endeavours fairly to hunt down a conclusion to its last retreat. As yet he has published, we believe, no formal commentary on any part of the Inspired Word; but there are few living commentators who have done so much to make dark passages light, and to straighten out crooked and involved passages of Scripture.

This peculiar faculty for detecting latent connections of thought, for combining widely-scattered hints, and compelling them to bear witness to a common truth which, in its turn illustrates and explains them all, has marked most of his contributions to sacred literature. It is apparent in the articles he contributed to "The Dictionary of the Bible," in the series of sermons he published under the title "Theology and Life," and even in the volume known as "Lazarus, and other poems," which is really a very suggestive and valuable commentary on many Biblical incidents; nor is it less apparent in the volume now before us. This volume contains no less than twenty studies of scriptures nearly all of which are obscure, many of which would not in all probability have been so likely to attract any man's attention as his own. These studies have already appeared in *Good Words* or the *Sunday Magazine*; but they display so remarkable an ingenuity, a learning so wide and varied, an acumen so keen, and they are such real and valuable aids to an intelligent apprehension of almost innumerable passages of Scripture, that it would have been nothing short of a calamity had they not been rescued from the oblivion to which magazine literature, unless republished, is doomed. We hardly know a volume likely to be more useful and

\* *The Main Principles of Ecclesiastical Authority in England.* By EDWARD MUSCUTT. London: Arthur Miall, Bouverie-street, Fleet-street, E.C.

\* Johnson, A.D. 944

\* *Biblical Studies.* By E. H. PLUMPTRE, M.A. (London: Strahan and Co.)



stimulating to teachers and students of the Word; it cannot fail to remind them of the undiscovered treasures which are yet to be raised from this sacred mine, or to quicken the hope that they too, by patient thought and endeavour, may bring up from it things new as well as old. Many of these "studies" are only too brief, and their themes are detached one from the other; but at times—as in "The Revolt of Absalom," "The Psalms of the Sons of Korah," and, above all, in the series "The Old Age of Isaiah," "Jewish Patriotism," "The Babylonian Captivity," and "The Last of the Prophets"—we get themes so treated as to scatter rays of light over wide spaces of revealed truth, and dealt with at more adequate length.

Of course, much as we value this book, and strongly as we commend it to all thoughtful readers of Scripture, we have our fault to find with it. And the fault is, a certain want of precision in statement which at times, as in the interesting study of "Manaen," must leave the general reader with only an imperfect hold of the subject; the Herods, for instance, are not strongly and decisively marked off from each other. In part, no doubt, this want of definiteness in the impression left on the reader's mind is owing to the allusive way in which the author refers to historical facts perfectly familiar to him, but not so familiar to others, when a precise statement of such facts, however tedious to him, would be acceptable and helpful to the uninformed or half-informed. But we confess that to us the defect seems to have a deeper cause—to spring from a certain want of imaginative force. With all his learning and intellectual mastery of his theme, Professor Plumtre seems to lack the shaping imagination which makes the past live again, and the dead move and breathe. Hence his drawing is not always firm, nor his colours vivid and intense. We are not rapt in spirit and carried back to the ages to which he depicts. We do not feel the stir and rush of life. We see pale shadows of men rather than the men themselves. In short, if we would realise the scenes which pass before us, if we would see them in definite form and rich varied hues, we must breathe our life into them, and exert whatever imaginative force we have upon them. But if we are able and willing to make this effort, we can hardly have a better guide through the kingdom of the past than the Professor, or a companion whose talk will be more accurate and informing and stimulating.

## BRIEF NOTICES.

*The Sinlessness of Jesus; an Evidence for Christianity.* By CARL ULLMANN, D.D. Translated from the seventh enlarged edition by Sophia Taylor. (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark). A work so well known, and holding so secure a place in the public esteem as Dr. Ullmann's "Sinlessness of Jesus," needs no elaborate review, no letter of commendation. It is a very suggestive book, and in its original German its style is not so involved and tedious as that of many theological works. But in English it is woefully tedious. There is no life, no fire, no transference of thought and word. Ullmann's treatise indeed is eminently one which should be rewritten by an equal mind rather than merely translated. If any one would be at the pains to master it, and to convey its drift in terse idiomatic English, few religious books would be more popular. Even as it is, no one can read it without acknowledging that it has started valuable trains of thought, and left a fertilising deposit in his mind. This new and enlarged edition is welcome.

*The Wealth of Nature.* By the Rev. JAMES MONTGOMERY, A.M. (W. B. Nimmo). We should be glad to find that this book and others of a like character were used as class books. The information which it contains is set forth in a style which is at once methodical, accurate, and interesting, an advantage which few books aiming to impart the same knowledge, can claim with equal truth. The subject of these chapters is the food supplies of the vegetable kingdom throughout the globe, from the corn plants to the roots and fruits of tropical climes. Mr. Montgomery has treated his subject so intelligently that his work may be read with great interest by any one who lacks information upon it. His introductory chapter, bearing upon the inter-relations of the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms, is a good preparation for a thoughtful and careful study of the succeeding chapters upon the "Treasures of Nature viewed in their adaptation to the wants of man."

On *Sermons Preached in Ramsgate*, by H. J. BEVIS (Snow and Co.), we make no further comment than that there is both truth and felicitous expressions in them. *Chimes from Heaven's Belfry*, by G. HUNT JACKSON (R. D. Dickinson), are in other words, Sermons of ten minutes' length and of very average merit. *Words in Season*, by H. B. BROWNING, M.A. (F. Pitman) differ from the above only in the last particular, and should be read "less than average." *A Reference Book on Modern Geography*, by Alex. C. EWALD, F.S.A. (Longmans) is a very handy book of geographical information. It gives as far as possible the

following particulars with regard to the various countries of the globe:—1. The ordinary physical features. 2. The political features, which embrace Commerce, Revenue, Education, Religion, Population, &c. It is impossible for any but those who have a wide acquaintance with the numerous books of this character to say in what respect this excels, in what it falls below, and in what it is identical with those which have preceded it. *The Secret Drawer*, by the author of "Alice Middleton," is a story published by the Sunday School Union, which is fairly interesting, but cannot compare either in interest or moral power with scores of books of the same character published by such firms as Nelsons, or Johnstone and Hunter of Edinburgh, or the Religious Tract Society. It is not our business to inquire why the Sunday School Union should go to the expense of printing the book, but yet the question will come to our mind.

*The Peace of God; Sermons on the Reconciliation of God and Man.* By WILLIAM BASIL JONES, M.A., Archdeacon of York. (Strahan, 1869.) These sermons have been preached during the last twelve years, at different times and in various places; and a kind of unity is given to the collection by a division of the volume into sections, and by the titles which have been chosen for particular sermons. The justice of God, and men's responsibility to it—faith, as the subjective instrument of reconciliation with Him,—and the consequences which flow from that reconciliation, form the three main topics of the several sections. Some of the Oxford sermons are somewhat technical and abstract, but Archdeacon Jones is, in the main, as plain and practical as he is earnest and devout. Much of his inspiration is to be attributed to the spirit of the age. The transition state of our theology moves him to protest vigorously against what he calls our indifference, even aversion, to exact and definite religious opinion. He would have things continue as they were, retaining the traditions of the elders as well as the faith once delivered to the saints. He has something to say (pp. 182, 183), even for the damnable clauses of the Athanasian Creed. Occasionally the theological argument is relieved by the introduction of a pictorial passage. Referring to the resurrection, Mr. Jones says:—

"There is something singularly true to nature in the fragmentary and inharmonious accounts of it preserved by the four Evangelists. Those who have observed the impression produced by any contemporary event of historical importance, say, by some great battle, the tidings of which are floated over sea and land by the electric wire, can appreciate the state of mind in which the disciples met for their evening meal. All was hurry, confusion, doubt, suspense. Some had only seen the sepulchre empty; others had seen a vision of angels; others had seen and conversed with the Lord Himself. He had appeared to Simon, had appeared to Magdalene, had appeared in another form to Cleopas and his companion. No man was ready to credit the evidence of another's senses. Some were not altogether prepared to trust that of their own. Moreover, they lived in a continual panic. The angry suspicions of their countrymen had been drawn upon them, and they dared only to assemble with closed doors. And if there were fears without, there were fightings within. All minds, save one, must have been occupied by a guilty sense of base desertion; that of Peter even by the recollection of direct denial. And then, in the midst of this scene of terror, confusion, anxiety, and remorse, there appears in some sudden and mysterious manner the form of One whom they had abandoned, denied, doubted, uttering the familiar benediction, fraught for the first time with its deepest meaning, 'Peace be unto you.'"

In one of the sermons preached before the University of Oxford, we find the following reference to the ecclesiastical question of the day:—

"The Church of God has fallen, as some of us are tempted to think, on evil times. . . . In the political world there is everywhere a growing inclination to emancipate the powers that be from all allegiance to a visible Christianity. . . . We are at this moment in the midst of a conflict, the issue of which must seriously affect, not only the fortunes of our own Church, but those of Christianity in these islands. I say 'of a conflict,' because although the battle is raging at various points, it is in reality but one. That phase of the struggle which touches us most nearly here is not the least important. I mean the question as to the relation which is hereafter to subsist between the Church and the University. If it please God to diminish the visible influence of the Church in this place, we may confess with shame and sorrow that this loss of power and prestige is no more than we have merited by years and ages of lost opportunities. But God may also compensate us by bringing under the influence of such teaching as we desire to give, another class of hearers, more earnest, more docile, and more industrious than too many of those who now fill these ancient homes of learning. And so, elsewhere, the loss of her political and social ascendancy, and the spoiling of her goods may serve in God's providence to recall the mind of the Church more keenly to her true nature and mission, and may give her a firm hold in places where at present she is little more than a shadow."

The sermons which have been placed in the first section seem to us to be the strongest. Our need of reconciliation is argued with point and power, and the modern speculations concerning human responsibility are discussed. The argument will oblige some to reconsider the question of the reality of sin.

*Oakdale Grange: a Tale of School Life for Boys.* By T. SIMMONS. (London: Bull, Simmons, and Co.) We have had so many stories of schoolboy life of late, that a new one, which is to make good its claim to a place in the school library, ought to have some special

merit. We have not found this in "Oakdale Grange." On the contrary, it is one of the poorest books of the kind we have met. Of real school work, the hard-fought struggles which stir the spirit and quicken the diligence of boys, we hear very little, but of low trickery, vicious indulgence, falsehood, and dishonesty, we have a great deal more than enough. We hope such events as here recorded are very rare in any school, and certain we are that to record them in this form, and to give the boys who may read the book the idea of such a state of anarchy and lawless disobedience as school life, can only do mischief.

## THE QUARTERLIES (Continued).

The *Quarterly* opens with a carefully written paper on the "English Bible." The history of our present version with which it opens does, in fact, supply one of the strongest arguments in favour of further revision, for if it was only by slow degrees that the translation has come to be what it is, it is certainly absurd to suppose that the last translators enjoyed an infallibility and attained a perfection not reached by their predecessors, or that the advanced scholarship and criticism of the nineteenth century is not able to improve a work done more than two centuries and a half ago. The subject of revision is treated with comparative brevity here, but the writer indicates some of the most important work that requires to be done, and meets very fairly some of the objections urged against attempting to do it. We fully believe with him that, instead of unsettling, its tendency would be to establish the confidence of the Christian public, often sorely tried at present by the strong statements made by scholars and critics which the unlearned are unable to test, and to which they often attach an undue importance. The "Church in Wales," or rather the present condition of Anglicanism in the Principality, is discussed by one who evidently feels the weight of the arguments against the Establishment derived from the predominance of Dissent, and is desirous, if possible, to break their force. Unfortunately the fact cannot be denied that Dissenters form a majority of the population, and though it may not be easy to separate Wales from England and to apply to the Establishment there the principle carried out in Ireland, we doubt whether the cause of the Anglican Establishment is any gainer thereby, for its defence must be weakened by the circumstance that in one large part of its territory its adherents are in a minority. All that the present writer has to say, however, is that the majority in favour of Dissent is not so great as has been represented, and that the Anglican Church in Wales has shown great activity during the last quarter of a century. As to the first, it is a question of statistics into which we cannot enter at length here, and as the writer only succeeds in reducing the majority claimed for Dissent by alleging that the "census Sunday was not an ordinary Sunday, nor was that attendance an ordinary attendance," it is not very necessary that we should undertake an elaborate refutation of calculations which are, to a large extent, conjectural. As to the second argument it proves nothing, especially while it is confessed that Dissenters have at all events been as active in the multiplication of chapels and schools as the Church. If, instead of looking merely to the increase in the number of buildings or of clergy, we had been able to compare the increase in the number of adherents on both sides, we think the Church would have still less reason to congratulate herself. We rejoice, however, in the signs of activity here quoted, but we demur to the idea that the manifestations of voluntary zeal and liberality are arguments in favour of the Establishment. We look at them in another light, and regard them as proofs rather than the Episcopal Church would do a far nobler and grander work if she were not a political Establishment. Mr. Froude is reviewed by one who does not acquiesce in many of his views. We suspect that the reason why his work has met with such an unfavourable reception in many quarters is the way in which he has told the story of the formation of the Anglican Establishment. A review of "Lanfrey's Napoleon" gives a fair idea of the value of a work which counteracts the influence of M. Thiers's representations. We are glad to see that Mr. Macmillan promises us an English translation of what is manifestly an important contribution to the history of the period. On the "Irish Question" the *Quarterly* looks more favourably on the Government measures than we should have expected, and discusses the Land Bill in particular in a very different way from that in which it has been treated in the House of Commons. In relation to the "Education of the People," of course it supports the Union rather than the League, but it recognises the difficulties arising out of the character of the Church Catechism, and suggests that, rather than accept even a conscience clause, Churchmen should divide it into two parts, and leave out all the questions referring to sacraments, so far as primary schools are concerned, a suggestion which we see commands the support of the Bishop of Manchester. The *Quarterly* does not understand the temper of the country if it supposes that such a concession will be sufficient, or that, under any circumstances, an extension of the present denominational system can be secured.

Published by ARTHUR MIALL, at No. 18, Bonville-street, London; and Printed by ROBERT KINGSTON BURT, Wine-office-court, Fleet-street, London.—Wednesday, May 4, 1870.